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A  
LETTER  
TO

Mr. Sn———l,

Occasion'd by some

INJURIOUS REFLECTIONS

IN THE

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History of the *Puritans.*

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# Injurious Reflections

IN THE

Fourth Volume of Mr. NEAL's  
History of the *Puritans*.  
K.

WHEREIN

Our Present LIBERTY is oppos'd to the  
*Persecutions* of former Times.

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By a PROTESTANT DISSENTER.

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LONDON:

Printed for MESHACH STEEN, in the  
*Inner-Temple-Lane.* 1739.

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A

# LETTER

TO

Mr. S———l,

Occasioned by

The FOURTH VOLUME of  
Mr. NEAL's *History of  
the Puritans.*

SIR,

**I**N the last Visit you favour'd me with, I observ'd you was very solicitous to know my Thoughts of the Fourth Volume of Mr. Neal's History of the *Puritans*; especially That Part which concern'd my Ancestor. A little Examination of the Book discover'd the ground of your

B

Curiosity;

Curiosity: And I take this Publick way to satisfy it.

Mr. Neal says, (a) *If Richard had allowed the Captain of his Guard to secure Fleetwood and Desborough, as he undertook to do at the Hazard of his Life, he might have been established; but the Poor-Spirited Protector told him he was afraid of Blood.* Poor-Spirited indeed, for refusing to be established by Blood in a possession he had no Right to! But, (b) *as Richard Cromwel was innocent of all the Evil his Father had done, so it appears, much to his Praise, how he declined to continue that Evil by the addition of his own Guilt.* Thus he might very well be enabled to (c) *return to a private Life with more Satisfaction than when he was advanced to the Sovereignty:* Which sets him in a much superiour Light to that his Father is placed in, where the Historian

(a) Vol. 4. pag. 210. (b) pag. 260. (c) pag. 217.

istorian relates (*d*) how he dissolved the Parliament by a File of Musqueteers, employed a Major to conduct the Speaker out of the Chair, and ordered a Common Soldier to take away that Fool's Bauble the Mace. Richard had not a right Spirit for such extraordinary Work, (*e*) who, in his Younger Years (we are inform'd) had not all that Zeal for Religion as was the Fashion of the Times. Nor, does he seem to have had a Taste for the Style of the Times, if we may judge by his (*f*) Letter to the University of Oxford, in Resignation of the Chancellorship; which is express'd in a manner very different from the *Cant of Oliver*, or Monk's (*g*) *Fumes of Fanaticism*. But it is strangely surprising that Men of Learning and good Sense shou'd be so intoxicated, with such *Fumes*, by King Charles II. (*b*) when His Majesty said his Prayers

(*d*) Vol. 4. pag. 64. (*e*) pag. 260. (*f*) pag. 259. (*g*) pag. 240. (*b*) pag. 256.

with such an audible Voice in the Room adjoyning, that the Ministers might hear him, " while he thanked God that he was a covenanted King, and hoped the Lord wou'd give him an humble, meek, forbearing Spirit, &c. Upon which Old Mr. Case lift up his Hands to Heaven, and blessed God, who had given them a praying King.

To return to Fleetwood and Desborough, where Mr. Neal says, (i) *Thus was the Grandeur of Cromwel's Family destroyed by the Pride and Resentment of some of it's own Branches: Fleetwood had married the Widow of Ireton, one of Oliver's Daughters, and being disappointed of the Protectorship by his Will, was determined that no single Person should be his Superior. Desborough, who had married Oliver's Sister, joined in the fatal Conspiracy.*

After

(i) Vol. 4. pag. 210.

After this we have a Letter from Mr. *Henry Cromwel*, Lord Lieutenant of *Ireland*, to his Brother Lieutenant General *Fleetwood*, in which are the following Words, (k) " Let me beg you to remember how his late Highness loved you; how he honoured you with the highest Trust, by leaving the Sword in your Hand, which must defend or destroy us. And his declaring your Highness his Successor, shews, that he left it there to preserve him and his Reputation." (l) From these and some other of his Letters (faith our Historian) 'tis natural to conclude that *L. G. Fleetwood* was at the Head of the Councils that deposed *Richard*, which might be owing either to his Commonwealth Principles, or to his disappointment of his Protectorship. However, when he found he cou'd not keep the Army within Bounds, who were for new Changes,

he

(k) Vol. 4. pag. 214. (l) pag. 215.

*he retired from publick Business, and spent the remainder of his Life privately among his Friends at Stoke-Newington, where he died soon after the Revolution, being more remarkable for Piety and Devotion than for Courage or deep Penetration in Politicks.*

I can say nothing to the private Evidences which help the Historian to conclude naturally: But the Evidence he has trusted the World with appears no better, to me, than something between the *Possible* and the *Probable*. Not, that I am in the least Pain about any Crutches he can bring to support his Conclusion: For I very frankly declare that, if Lt. Gen. *Fleetwood* was the Occasion of pulling down the *Usurpation*, I so far value my self upon being his Descendant. And if he aimed at a Commonwealth, it was more eligible than the other Form, in my Judgment. But, if he meant his own Succession;

sion ;—I shou'd be ashamed of the Design, and wou'd rejoice in the disappointment ; because of the glorious Consequences which followed to make us the *happy People* we now are. I am therefore so fond of such a piece of History, that I shou'd have no Delight in seeing it confuted. However, I take upon me to give the *Lye* to the malicious Motives our Historian has assign'd : And I here pronounce them to be *Scandalous* and *False*. Indeed it looks extreamly gracious in Mr. *Neal* to leave the General his Piety and Devotion, since he might have cancell'd them when his hand was in as a Judge of Man's Heart : And I think that wou'd have been less unbecoming the Character of a *Divine*, than to unite them with such wicked *Pride and Resentment*. But 'tis fit Mr. *Neal* shou'd be told that he has no more Right to (m) *ransack the very Heart than Bishop Harsenet had.*

(m) Vol. 2. pag. 233.

In

In relation to General *Fleetwood's*  
*Courage and Politicks*, I do believe  
 it is impossible for Mr. *Neal* and I  
 to maintain a Dispute ~~for~~ any other  
 Play than that of dry Affirming and  
 Denying. So I shall only oppose his  
 Reflection with the Credit of *Oliver*  
*Cromwel's* known *Courage and deep*  
*Penetration in Politicks*. For, if it  
 was really the Design of *Oliver* to de-  
 clare *Fleetwood* his Successor, 'tis na-  
 tural to conclude, that he had quite  
 different Thoughts of his General  
 from Mr. *Neal* and his Informers  
 both *Spiritual* and *Temporal*. But,  
 if *Oliver* declared what he never in-  
 tended, — it is an unlucky Fact in  
 Proof of the most odious Representa-  
 tion that is given of him by the worst  
 of his Enemies. Here the Historian  
 is welcome to please his own Fancy,  
 and choose for himself.

Whether General *Fleetwood* retired  
 from *Publick Business* to *Stoke-New-*  
*ington*, or not, is of no consequence

to any body, in the World, except the Historian. But, I think it is of some consequence to have it known that there was a Time when General *Fleetwood* did retire in dislike to the *Proceedings* against the *King's Life*: Which I now publish as an honour to his Name, and his *Posteriority*. And I leave the Fact to be accounted for by the Historian's *deep-penetration* in Hearts.

The next thing I am disposed to take notice of, is Mr. Neal's great Candour and Impartiality in the Case of Dr. Owen. Our Historian informs us, (n) that the Wallingford-House Party, of which Fleetwood and Defborough were the Head, invited Dr. Owen and Dr. Manton to their Consultations. Dr. Owen went to Prayer before they enter'd on Business, but Dr. Manton being late before he came, heard a loud Voice from within, saying, He must down, and he

C *shall*

(n) Vol. 4. pag. 209.

shall down. Manton knew the Voice to be Dr. Owen's, and understood him to mean the Deposing of Richard, and therefore would not go in. But the Writer of Dr. Owen's Life discredits this Story ; tho', in my opinion, 'tis very probable, for the Doctor inclined to a Commonwealth Government ; He sided with the Army, and drew up their Address against Oliver's being King ; upon which he declined in the Protector's Favour, and as soon as Richard became Chancellor of Oxford, he turned him out of the Vice-Chancellorship.

This part of the History I shall confront with a Quotation from the *Memoirs of Dr. Owen's Life*, done by a Person whose good Character is no more to be question'd than the Historian's : And I make no scruple to add that Mr. *Asty* went upon as good *Authorities* as Mr. *Neal* can pretend to. I have the Originals : Mr. *Neal* has long profess'd a value for

for the Hand which wrote them ; and he might have seen them for asking. From these Originals were transcribed the *Memoirs of Dr. Owen's Life*, published by Mr. *Asty* in 1721. From hence I take the following Account, *viz.* September 3, 1658. Oliver Cromwell died, and his Son Richard was made Protector of the Commonwealth, but did not long continue in that high Station : The Officers of the Army brought in the Members of the old Parliament, who compell'd him to resign. These were turn'd out by Lambert, and a Committee of Safety erected : But they were soon after brought in again by General Monk, with the secluded Members, who when they met, voted for a new Parliament to sit at Westminster ; and these were the Instruments that brought in the King. We were oblig'd to take notice of these things, because Dr. Owen is suppos'd, by the interest he had in some Officers

of the Army, who met at Wallingford-House (of which some few were Members of his Church) to have had a chief hand in the alteration of the Government, which happen'd at that time. To his *Art of perswasion*, it seems this change was owing, and it is insinuated, that this was done out of Party-Zeal, or Resentment, because his Friends were not permitted to hold the Reins in their own hand. This charge is brought against him in a Book entitled, *Reliquiæ Baxterianæ*. viz. That " Dr. Owen, and his Assitants did the main Work: He gather'd a Church at Lieutenant-General Fleetwood's Quarters, at Wallingford-House, consisting of the active Officers of the Army. (This *Church-gathering* has been the *Church-scattering Project*.) In this Assembly it was determin'd that Richard's Parliament must be dissolv'd, and then he quickly fell himself. Again, it is said, that Dr.

" Dr. *Owen* was the chief that head-  
 " ed the Independents in the Army  
 " with the greatest height, confi-  
 " dence, and applause ; and that he  
 " was the great persuader of *Fleet-*  
 " *wood, Desborough*, and the rest of  
 " the Officers of the Army, who  
 " were his gather'd Church, to com-  
 " pel *Richard Cromwell* to dissolve  
 " his Parliament." *Mr. Baxter* has  
 not oblig'd the *World* by producing his  
*Vouchers* for it, which method in the  
 like instances he calls *Slander*. 'Tis  
 pity *Mr. Baxter* did not publish this  
 account in the *Doctor's* life-time, for  
 then doubtless he wou'd have set the  
 matter in a just light ; but since 'tis  
 otherwise, we must take leave to ob-  
 serve that *Historians*, on whose credit  
 we receive an account of the *Trans-*  
*actions* of those *Times* are silent as to  
 this matter, particularly *Whitlock*  
 in his impartial *Memoirs* (as *Mr.*  
*Baxter* himself calls them) says nothing  
 of it ; and it may be Party-Zeal (to  
 speak

*Speak the best of it) might carry that reverend Author beyond his Evidence; but to all such intimations we shall subjoin the Doctor's own vindication of himself, which considering his known Character in the World, will (we hope) obtain credit beyond unattested Assertions to the contrary. It seems the Popish Author of a Book intitled, Fiat lux, had charg'd the Doctor with having had a hand in the late Troubles in the Nation, and affirm'd (they are his own Words) " That he was part of that dismal Tempest, which overbore all before it, not only Church and State, but Reason, Right, Honesty, all true Religion, and even Good-nature too."*

*To this the Doctor replies with just reflections on the Author's desperate Malice, and vindicates himself in these Words, viz. " To deliver you, if it may be, from the like mis-carriages for the future, let me inform you, that the Author of the*

" *Animadversions* is a Person that  
 " never had a hand in, nor gave  
 " consent to the raising of any War  
 " in these Nations, nor to any Po-  
 " litical Alteration in them, no, not  
 " to any one that was amongst us,  
 " during our revolutions ; but he  
 " acknowledges that he liv'd and  
 " acted under them the things where-  
 " in he thought his duty consisted,  
 " and challenges all Men to charge  
 " him with doing the least personal  
 " injury to any Man, professing him-  
 " self ready to give satisfaction to any  
 " one that can justly claim it." *We*  
*have also another testimony of his own*  
*innocence in this matter, in his answer*  
*to that slanderous Book, whereof one*  
*Vernon, a High-Church Clergyman*  
*in Gloucestershire, was the Author,*  
*which Libel was answer'd by Sir*  
*Thomas Overbury, and by the Doctor*  
*distinctly. He brings the same charge*  
*against the Doctor as Mr. Baxter*  
*has done ; and what does the Doctor*  
*reply ?*

reply? " Of the same nature (says  
 " he) is what he affirms of my being  
 " the Instrument in the ruin of  
 " *Richard Cromwell*, with whose set-  
 " ting up, and pulling down, I had  
 " no more to do than himself." Having  
 set this matter in this just light, we  
 doubt not but every impartial Reader  
 will think the Doctor sufficiently vin-  
 dicated from a charge that was not  
 supported by any Evidence, and ap-  
 pears not to have the least founda-  
 tion.

What I have here brought from  
 the *Memoirs* of Dr. Owen's Life is a  
 manifest contradiction to the account  
 our Historian gives in this particular.  
 When matters of Fact are contested  
 by *Party-Authorities*, I am sensible,  
 there will be a *Byass* in the Reader:  
 Yet, when a Person of Dr. Owen's  
 establish'd Reputation answers for  
 himself to a Charge, one may expect  
 to have his Declaration more regard-  
 ed than the Suggestions of an Adver-  
 sary.

sary. And thus I leave it to the Reader, with this addition from the *Memoirs*, that the *Book call'd Fiat lux*, was written by John Vincent Lane, a Franciscan Friar; wherein under the pretence of recommending *Moderation and Charity*, he with a great deal of subtlety invites men over to the *Church of Rome*, as the only infallible cure of all *Church-divisions*: Two Impressions of this *Book* were printed off before the *Doctor* had seen it; at length it was sent him by a Person of Honour, who desired him to write an answer to it; which he did in a very short time: This *Answer* bears the *Title* of *Animadversions on Fiat lux*, by a Protestant; which being generally accepted, made the Friar very angry, so that he published a Sheet or two by way of reply, which produc'd the *Doctor's answer*, entitled, *A Vindication of Animadversions on Fiat lux*, to which never any reply was given. This *Book* recommended him to

*the esteem of the Lord Chancellor Hide, who, by Sir Bulstrode Whitlock sent for him, and acknowledg'd the Service of his late Books against Fiat lux ; assuring him that he had serv'd the best of any English Protestant of late Years ; and that for these performances the Church was bound to own and advance him ; and at the same time he offer'd him preferment if he wou'd accept it.*

Mr. *Neal* was a Subscriber to the very Book which contains the *Memoirs* of Dr. *Owen's* Life ; and the Doctor's own Reflections on a *Slenderous Libel* against himself, in a Letter to Sir *Thomas Overbury*. It is therefore a little strange that he shou'd lay aside the Historian, to deliver his Opinion in favour of such a Story as he relates about Dr. *Manton*. I will not insist on the possibility of Dr. *Manton's* mistaking a Voice ; but it was certainly more than possible for

for him to mistake the *Application* of *Words* he heard, when his *Ears* were not in the same Room with the Mouth which utter'd: And it may be consider'd how far an *Open-Door* will agree with such *Close-Consultations*. As the *Words* were, only, *understood to mean the Depositing of* Richard, they might, really, have meant the *Downfall of Antichrist*: And, *in my Opinion*, 'tis very probable, for Dr. *Owen* knew better than to denounce so absolutely from any *Authority* that was capable of being mistaken. And shall a Story thus founded upon *Conjecture*, be admitted, by Mr. *Neal*, in direct contradiction to Dr. *Owen's* positive Declaration concerning himself? This is such an assault upon the Doctor's *Veracity*, that I cou'd not bear to have it stand uncensur'd; and, for that reason (alone) I concern'd my self with this Part of the History;—having no Objection to the Contents of the

Charge. I hope it may be affirm'd, without Reflection, that Dr. *Owen* was exceeded by none of his *Contemporaries* in any good Quality whatever: And I will venture through all Mr. *Neal's* displeasure to assert my Trust in Dr. *Owen's* *Testimony* concerning himself, in opposition to every Report.

Now, after all this personal Partiality, I must do our Historian the justice to own that he has generously told us how the *Spirit of Persecution* haunted all *Denominations* more or less; and most appear'd when the *Spiritual Guides* had the greatest Influence. All *Parties*, we find will have their Gathering and their Scattering Projects in Church and State. From whence 'tis natural to conclude, that they, who are in the Saddle, will keep their Seat as long as they can; whilst they, who wou'd be there, will be ever jostling and jockeying for it. In what manner this has been verify'd,

verify'd, I refer to the 244<sup>th</sup> page of the 4<sup>th</sup> Volume; where Mr. Neal, in one short Period, very comprehensively informs his Reader that, *as the Army and Independants over-reached the Presbyterians in 1648, the Presbyterians, in conjunction with the Scots, blew up the Independants in 1659, and next Year the Episcopal Party, by an artful management of the credulous Presbyterians, undermined and deceived them both.*

When Power is engaged on the side of Justice and Mercy to Mankind, it is a glorious Trust: But, to see such an advantage employ'd, by a reasoning sociable Creature, to torment it's own Nature,—is shocking; and when *Religion* is transform'd into the *Tool of Persecution*,—'tis best represented by a *Fallen Angel*. How Power has been possess'd and abus'd by all *Denominations*, is too plain in the History before us: Tho' I must observe that the smallest *Share of Guilt*

*Guilt* seems to lie upon the Independants here ; which might be owing to the noble Principle they profess'd, of (o) *an Universal Toleration*. But, it moves me when I read how the poor Independants became (p) *Petitioners for Toleration* against their *Brethren*, the *Presbyterians*, who (q) *were enchanted with the Beauties of Covenant Uniformity*. I am so remote from any *Party-Aim* in this Remark, that I sincerely declare my Respect and Esteem for both *Denominations* to be so equally divided, as leaves me at a loss where to give the Right Hand of *Fellowship*.

Every Party, we see, had an Instrument—or a solemn *League* and *Covenant* ;—or *Something* as good to make a *Test* of: and *all* might be thought, by their *Owners*, unexceptionable enough to be complied with. This will be easily supposed by any Man

(o) Vol. 4. pag. 88. (p) pag. 70. Vol. 3. pag. 304, 305, 310. (q) Vol. 3. pag. 310.

Man who examines himself, because he may recollect a time when he believed so infallibly well of his own Opinions as to conclude a little unreasonably against a different way of *Thinking*. Yet, the least Consideration makes it self-evident that every *Mortal* (except his *Holiness* at *Rome*) may mistake, and therefore can have no Right to oblige People to believe more than they can. To be serious, how wretched is the Condition of that People whose Consciences, Bodies and Estates must be subject to *Civil* and *Ecclesiastical Tyranny*! On the contrary, how happy is that *Nation*, where the Conscience is left free; where all are subject to *Laws* of their own making, and alike protected by them!

We read how it has been with all our *Ancestors*, in their Turns:—We feel how it is with Us now.—The one fairly set against the other, can admit of no Difficulty in the *Option*.

There

There was a time when, our Historian tells us, *if Cromwell had lived ten or twelve Years longer, Episcopacy might have been lost beyond Recovery.* —Now *Episcopacy* is in the full and safe *Possession* of *Dignities* and *Emoluments*. The time was when *Dis-senters* were persecuted by *Church-men*, and by one another:—That evil Spirit is suppress'd, and we are now secure in *Liberty*, under the most righteous merciful Government of a *Prince*, who is a determin'd Enemy to *Persecution*, and who cannot be outdone in *Zeal* for the *Protestant Interest*, or the *Good* of his *Subjects*. This being our present happy Case, surely we never can be mad enough to give a *common Enemy* the Diversion of drawing Us in to disparage the *Revolution*, to disturb the *Protestant Succession*, or to assist in alienating the Affections of the People from King *George*, his *Family* and his *Administration*. The *Protestant*

*testant Dissenters* particularly shou'd remember in whose *Reign* and *Administration*, and by what *Party* their *Liberties* began to be invaded with an *Act* to divest them of their *natural Right* as *Parents*. And, if the first Attack was so violent, the least that cou'd have been fear'd, from the next, was to be deprived of their *Legal Right* to *Vote* at *Elections*, as *Englishmen*. It is absurd, then, to suppose a *Protestant Dissenter* can be deluded, by any pretence, to *Vote* such *Persons* into a *Capacity of taking away their Votes*. They must believe against Demonstration to expect the Friendship of a *Party*, which never possess'd the Power that did not assault their *Liberties*. And if the last *Act* of Power had the Cruelty to oppress them in so tender a point as the Education of their *Children*—, I don't see how it is possible for the *Dissenters* to have any Evidence of a *Conversion*,

E without

without a *desperate Experiment* ;— which, I know, they are too *Wise* to try.

Before I take my leave of this History, I must congratulate my Countrymen that they are not pester'd with the (r) *Ordinance of 1649.* *The Preamble of which sets forth, that,*

“ Whereas divers Scandalous and Seditious Pamphlets are daily printed, and dispersed with officious Industry, by the malignant *Party*, both at Home and Abroad, with a design to subvert the present *Government*, and to take off the Affections of the People from it, it is therefore Ordained,

“ That the Author of every Seditious Libel or Pamphlet shall be fined Ten Pounds, or suffer Forty Days Imprisonment. The Printer Five Pounds, and his Printing-Press to be broken. The Bookseller Forty Shillings ; the Buyer Twenty

(r) Vol. 4. pag. 17, 18.

“ Twenty Shillings, if he conceals  
“ it, and does not deliver it up to  
“ a Justice of Peace. It is further  
“ Ordained, That no News-Paper  
“ shall be printed, or sold without  
“ Licence, under the Hand of the  
“ Clerk of the Parliament, or the  
“ Secretary of the Army, or such  
“ other Person as the Council of  
“ State shall appoint. No Printing-  
“ Presses are to be allowed but in  
“ *London*, and in the two *Univer-*  
“ *sities*. All Printers are to enter in-  
“ to Bonds of three Hundred Pounds  
“ not to print any Pamphlet against  
“ the State, without Licence, as a-  
“ foresaid, unless the Author’s or  
“ Licenser’s Name, with the Place  
“ of his Abode, be prefixed. All  
“ Importers of Seditious Pamphlets  
“ are to forfeit Five Pounds for e-  
“ very such Book or Pamphlet. No  
“ Books are to be landed in any  
“ other Port but that of *London*,  
“ and to be viewed by the Master  
“ and

( 28 )

“ and Wardens of the Company of  
“ Stationers. This Act to continue in  
“ Force for two Years.”

S I R,

This Letter wou'd have waited on you sooner, if it had not been detain'd by private Reasons. Mr. *Neal* and Mr. *Asty* are the only Authors I have to do with. You put me upon turning over the History; which made it necessary for me to lo okin-to the *Memoirs*: And, in return, I make you accountable for the Consequences.

I am,

S I R,

Your very Humble Servant.

February 1st,  
1738-9

